



Cpl. Jennifer Brofer
Staff Sgt. Allen Lindsay, curriculum development and schooling NCO for Eastern Recruiting Region, takes an inventory of his rifle and pistol gear at the Depot Armory Sunday, in preparation for a six-month deployment to Iraq.

DEPLOY,

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pull from the other forces,” said Warwick. “It’s just above the capabilities of operating forces of everything that needs to be done, so they have to augment those forces with Marines from other bases and stations throughout the United States.”

Warwick believes this to be the first time this many Marines have been deployed at any one time from Parris Island.

“As far as I know, this is the first time,” he said. “Of course, our operational tempo hasn’t been this high at least since Desert Storm.”

The first Marines deployed in October, and the next groups left in December and January. Eleven Marines left in February, and the last two, Staff Sgt. Allen Lindsay, curriculum development and schooling staff NCO for Eastern Recruiting Region, and Maj. Steven Pitingolo, regional assistant of officer procurement for ERR, left Monday, with less than a week’s notice to prepare.

“I found out I was leaving Wednesday,” said Lindsay, who only had five days to get up-to-date on his shots, ship his personal items, check out weapons

and gear and take care of the necessary legal paperwork. “It doesn’t bother me at all. The only negative thing is being so short-fused.”

One of the disadvantages of being given such short notice is the Marines “don’t really have time to take the regular deployment leave like most Marines who go on a regular scheduled deployment do,” said Warwick.

“If I would’ve volunteered, I would’ve taken leave to visit my two kids in Florida,” said Lindsay, who has already been on five deployments. “I was on the road [Saturday] to Atlanta and back, and my former father-in-law brought my daughters up to Atlanta, so I got to see them for a couple of hours.”

However, even with such short notice, Lindsay said he is “ready to go [to Iraq] and get everything squared away.”

According to Warwick, there will not be a need to deploy large numbers of Depot Marines for at least another six months.

“We probably won’t deploy anymore Marines for a while, at least until these deployments are up,” he said. “Then we’ll be tasked again, but we don’t know how many we’ll be tasked with. We do know that we are going

to end up being tasked again within six months.”

The Marines who deployed for six months may not actually return for up to 210 days, or seven months, said Warwick.

“Most of them are going to be gone 179 days, and those who left in February will be back in the September time frame,” he said. “However, their orders have been cut for 210 days just in case they have to be held over longer. So, they’ll be back somewhere in between 180 and 210 days.”

Having Marines deploy from Parris Island is a rare opportunity that will be a good experience for all involved, said Warwick.

“I think this is what Marines do, and this is what they want to do,” he said. “I think it’s good that the Marines aboard Parris Island have the opportunity to be involved in this. Otherwise, if we weren’t tasked to augment, they wouldn’t have had the chance to participate in the operations.”

“This’ll be some good experience for the Marines stationed at Parris Island when they return,” he added. “They can give other Marines their views of the war and what went on, and they can help them if they have to deploy sometime.”

DeCA implements new bounced check policy

CPL. JENNIFER

BROFER

STAFF WRITER

Shoppers who write bad checks at the commissary may soon see money deducted from their bank accounts on payday.

The Defense Commissary Agency recently implemented a policy for collecting money owed on customers’ returned checks.

Before the new policy, commissary officials had to make two attempts to collect the money through an individual’s bank, a process that involved a lot of time and paperwork.

With the new policy, however, commissaries will no longer have to wait up to two months to recover funds from a bounced check. The commissary will send the check to the bank once. If that fails, the money owed will be deducted from the customer’s bank account on military paydays through a collection agency called Solutran, according to Gerri Young, a DeCA spokeswoman.

If no money is available in the account on payday, the request for money will be sent to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service to retrieve the money owed from the service member through their chain of command.

According to a DeCA press release, five commissaries in the United States have been test locations, and more will soon be added, eventually bringing the entire system under the process.

Although the new policy has not yet been implemented in the Depot Commissary,



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- Linda Cleveland, lead sales store checker

employees are looking forward to the change because it will cut down on the number of bad checks, as well as the time-consuming paperwork that goes with retrieving funds.

“I think it will be a good policy to deter a lot of returned checks because it’s a slap on the wrist for some people, but it’s not something taken real seriously,” said Linda Cleveland, lead sales store checker for the Depot Commissary.

According to Jim Gibb, store administrator, there were 16,143 Commissary transactions for the month of January. Of those, 17 were customers who wrote bad checks, less than one percent of all transactions. The Commissary receives an average of 10 - 15 returned checks per month.

“We might only have 10 - 15 returned checks, but depending on the dollar amount, it might be \$200 - \$300 per check,” said Cleveland. “That’s money that we have to collect – money that the Commissary is losing.”

Gibb said the number of returned checks is not as big

of a problem as it used to be, now that processing a check takes a lot less time than before. A process that used to take 7-10 days now only takes one to two days.

So, shoppers who think they can write a bad check and get by because the check will not clear until after payday can think again.

“It used to be that way, but now checks go through the next day,” said Gibb. “Even on the weekends, our checks go in on Monday.”

Commissary employees said although some shoppers may deliberately write bad checks, they realize that many of them are truly by mistake.

“I do realize that sometimes people make genuine mistakes in their subtraction,” said Cleveland.

“If you’re doing it in your head, you can easily make an error. A one in the wrong place can really throw your check book off, especially if all your dollars are accounted for,” she added.

Whether a bounced check is deliberate or not, the new policy will ensure that every dollar owed, whether \$2 or \$200, is paid in full.



Cpl. Alisha R. Fitzgerald
Seaman Victoria Thomas, Crucible Aid Station corpsman, weighs in 11-year-old William Buck, a sixth-grader at Robert Smalls Elementary School, in the school nurse’s office Feb. 23 as part of the ‘Healthy Future’ program designed to teach students healthy habits about diet and exercise. Thomas and two other CAS corpsmen volunteered to help document every student’s height and weight for the program.

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know them and aid in their development,” said Green, who is also the president of the Chief Petty Officers Association of the Lowcountry.

Sailors are to begin meeting with their assigned students once a week, to increase as needed, based on the individual student’s performance at school. Other sailors, who were not assigned students, will be helping out in the classroom as proctors and in assistance with reading.

Green said that he and the sailors were honored to be able to provide this type of

service to the school. He feels that volunteering to help students is something vital for the local community.

“We want to be active and visible in the community, and of course, a lot of us have children who are students in the school system here,” he said. “All the sailors were really enthusiastic about being able to work with the students.”

The feel-good sensations that come from helping the children have led Green and the others to already consenting to volunteer at the school next year. He said they are already anticipating the partnership again for next school year.